

ABSTRACT

Research Paper: An Error Analysis of Chinese Characters Written by Beginning Learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language

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This study is an error analysis of characters written by native English speaking learners of Chinese as a foreign language. Although research has been done on learning to read Chinese, there is little research in the area of writing (Allen, 1992; Su, 2010). To rectify this, this study was carried out to research the type of errors beginning learners make in writing Chinese characters.

Four native speakers of English who were enrolled in a university level first semester Chinese course took part in this study. Participants were given two writing prompts. Their writing was recorded on video to track stroke order. For each writing task as well as both tasks combined, the following items were recorded: the number of characters, correct characters and their percentage of all characters, correct semantic radicals and phonetic radicals, correct stroke order within semantic radicals and phonetic radicals, time to complete the tasks, and time averaged per character.

Data was analyzed through a correct/incorrect score. Further studies would need to be done to be able to generalize the results to the larger population of English learners of Chinese.